



Northern
Ireland
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Statistics and Research Branch

Views on Organised Crime: Findings from the January 2008 Northern Ireland Omnibus Survey

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KEY FINDINGS

Types of crime associated with organised crime

- ◆ 80% of those surveyed associated drug dealing with organised crime in Northern Ireland, 38% with fuel smuggling/laundering and 37% with armed robbery.

Buying illegal drugs

- ◆ 47% of respondents thought that buying illegal drugs caused extreme harm.
- ◆ 44% of people thought that buying illegal drugs damaged victims' health.

Buying laundered or smuggled fuel

- ◆ 13% of those surveyed thought that buying laundered or smuggled fuel caused extreme harm.
- ◆ 37% of people thought that legitimate businesses and retailers could lose trade as a result of buying laundered or smuggled fuel.

Protection or extortion racketeering

- ◆ 29% of respondents thought that protection and extortion racketeering caused extreme harm.
- ◆ 26% of those surveyed thought that protection or extortion racketeering could lead to fear in the community.

Buying counterfeit CDs or DVDs

- ◆ 21% of those surveyed thought that there was no harm associated with buying counterfeit CDs or DVDs.
- ◆ 36% of respondents thought that buying counterfeit CDs or DVDs would cause legitimate businesses and retailers to lose trade.

Overall view on organised crime

- ◆ 32% of people surveyed thought that organised crime caused extreme harm.
- ◆ 20% of respondents thought that organised crime could lead to fear in the community.

Organised Crime Task Force (OCTF)

- ◆ 37% of those surveyed had heard of the OCTF; this was communicated mainly via television (75%).

INTRODUCTION

The Northern Ireland Organised Crime Task Force (OCTF) was established in September 2000 to provide strategic direction for a multi agency approach to tackling organised crime. Chaired by the Policing and Justice Minister, Paul Goggins MP, the OCTF brings together representatives from Government, law enforcement, the business community and other partners. It is a forum where partner agencies can discuss problems, share information and agree priorities.

The OCTF published its 8th Annual Report & Threat Assessment of the scale and nature of the problem of organised crime in Northern Ireland together with its strategy to tackle it in June 2008. The Threat Assessment identifies that the level of organised criminality remains high within Northern Ireland.

In order to gain an understanding of the level of public awareness and knowledge of the harm caused by organised crime, the Northern Ireland Office Statistics and Research Branch, on behalf of the OCTF, commissioned a series of questions in the January 2008 Northern Ireland Omnibus Survey.

The Northern Ireland Omnibus Survey is conducted several times each year by the Central Survey Unit of the Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency and is designed to provide a snapshot of the behaviour, lifestyle and views of a representative sample of people in Northern Ireland. Further information on sample selection can be found in the Technical Notes Section.

The survey comprises two distinct parts: core questions about the respondents and their individual circumstances, and a variety of mainly attitudinal questions commissioned by clients. Where appropriate, differences in relation to gender, area of residence, religion, age and employment status are highlighted.

SURVEY FINDINGS

Types of crime respondents associated with organised crime in Northern Ireland¹

- ◆ 80% of those surveyed in 2008 associated drug dealing with organised crime in Northern Ireland, 38% with fuel smuggling/laundrying and 37% with armed robbery (Table 1). A similar survey in 2007 revealed that 81% associated drug dealing with organised crime in Northern Ireland, while 50% and 41% connected armed robbery and fuel smuggling/laundrying respectively

Table 1: Types of Crime respondents associated with organised crime in Northern Ireland

	%
Drug dealing	80
Fuel smuggling/laundrying	38
Armed robbery	37
Protection/extortion racketeering	31
Money laundrying	30
Cigarette smuggling	26
Trading in counterfeit goods	21
Human trafficking	20
Counterfeit money production	10
Cash van robberies	8
Plastic/credit card fraud	8
Identity fraud	5
Other	11
None	1
Refusal/don't know	3
Base	1,238

¹ Respondents were probed by the interviewer to think of crimes they would associate with organised crime. Respondents' could offer up to 6 types of crime when answering this question.

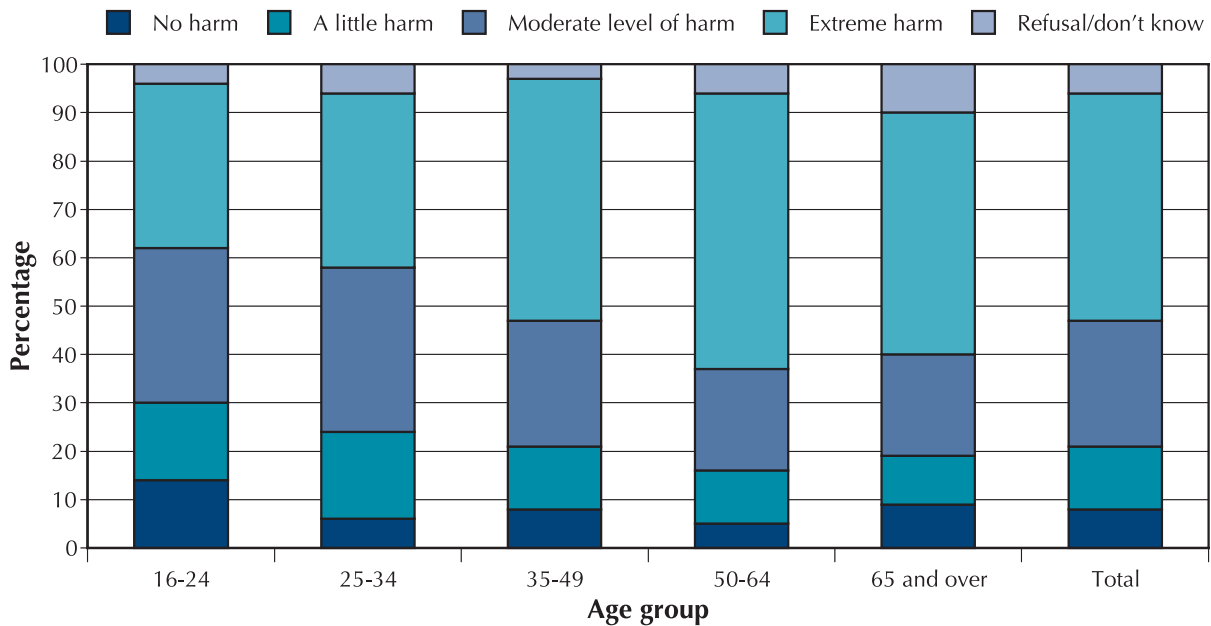
Level of harm caused locally by specific types of organised crime and the main impact of these organised crime types

Respondents were asked to give their views on how much harm was caused locally by specific organised crime types (buying illegal drugs, buying laundered or smuggled fuel, protection or extortion racketeering, buying counterfeit CDs or DVDs and buying smuggled cigarettes) and the main impact of these organised crime types. After these questions, respondents were asked to assess the overall harm and the main impact of organised crime in Northern Ireland.

Buying illegal drugs

- ◆ Almost half of respondents (47%) thought that buying illegal drugs caused extreme harm in their local community (Table 2).
- ◆ 57% of those aged between 50 and 64 years thought that buying illegal drugs resulted in extreme harm compared with 33% of those aged between 16 and 24 years (Figure 1).
- ◆ 50% of females were of the opinion that buying illegal drugs caused extreme harm compared with 43% of males.
- ◆ 44% of people thought that buying illegal drugs damaged victims' health while 31% of people thought that they contributed to violence in the community (Table 3).

Figure 1: Respondents' views on the level of harm caused by people buying illegal drugs by age group



Buying laundered or smuggled fuel

- ◆ Only 13% of those surveyed thought that buying laundered or smuggled fuel caused extreme harm, while 33% thought that it caused a moderate level of harm (Table 2).
- ◆ 37% of people thought that legitimate businesses and retailers could lose trade as a result of buying laundered or smuggled fuel while 31% thought that small businesses and retailers could be forced to close (Table 3).
- ◆ Those respondents living in Belfast (31%) were less likely than those in the East (39%) or West (38%) of Northern Ireland to think that legitimate businesses and retailers would lose trade.

Table 2: Respondents’ opinions on the level of harm caused locally by specific types of organised crime

	Buying illegal drugs (%)	Buying laundered or smuggled fuel (%)	Protection or extortion racketeering (%)	Buying counterfeit CDs or DVDs (%)	Buying smuggled cigarettes (%)	Overall harm caused by organised crime ¹ (%)
No harm	8	17	16	21	14	12
A little harm	13	29	18	35	31	21
Moderate level of harm	26	33	27	27	33	28
Extreme harm	47	13	29	11	16	32
Refusal/don’t know	6	7	10	5	6	6

1 Separate question and not average percentage figures for the other listed organised crime types.

Table 3: Respondents’ views on the main impact caused by specific types of organised crime¹

	Buying illegal drugs (%)	Buying laundered or smuggled fuel (%)	Protection or extortion racketeering (%)	Buying counterfeit CDs or DVDs (%)	Buying smuggled cigarettes (%)	Main impact of organised crime ² (%)
Damage to the victim’s health	44	-	-	-	38	16
Violence in the community	31	-	10	1	-	16
Fear in the community	17	-	26	-	-	20
Loss of confidence in law enforcement agencies	4	5	5	-	3	5
Less money available for public services	1	11	-	3	8	3
Legitimate businesses/retailers lose trade	-	37	15	36	31	18
Small businesses/retailers forced to close	-	31	22	27	14	8
Environmental pollution	-	7	-	-	-	0
Reduction in investment by legitimate businesses/retailers	-	-	8	-	-	3
Loss of jobs	-	-	6	8	2	3
Market flooded with inferior goods	-	-	-	17	-	2
Other	1	2	0	1	1	0
None	0	2	1	3	2	0
Refusal/don’t know	2	4	6	3	3	4

1 A dash ‘-’ shows that this indicator was not asked for this particular question.

2 Separate question and not average percentage figures for the other listed organised crime types.

Protection or extortion racketeering

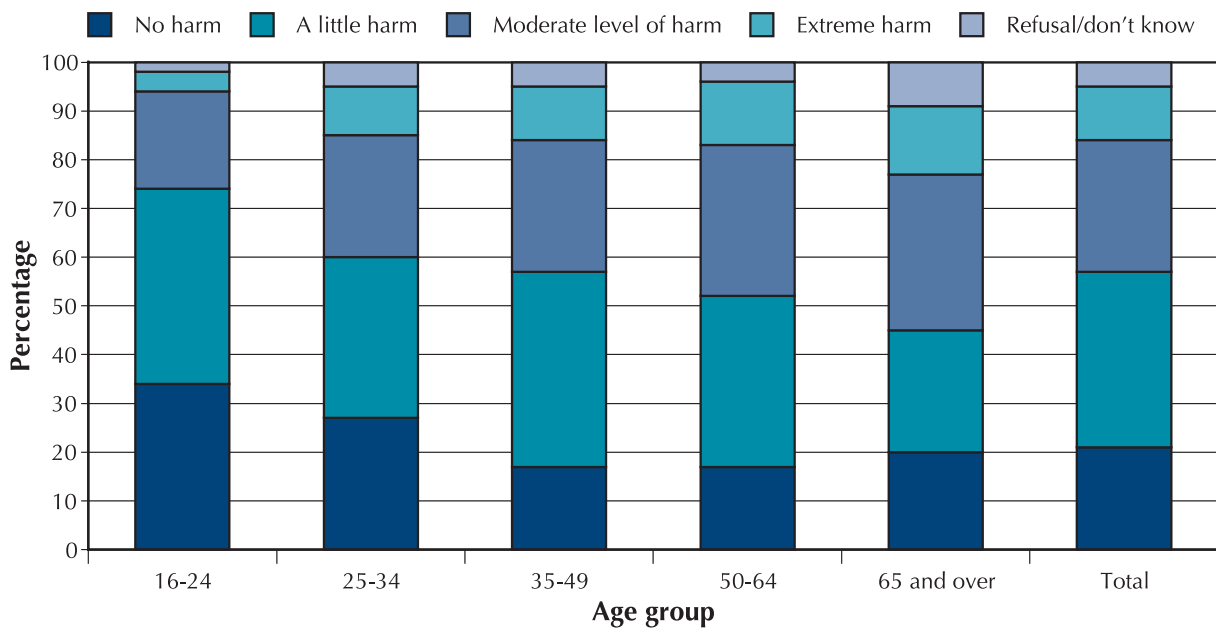
- ◆ 29% of respondents thought that protection and extortion racketeering caused extreme harm (Table 2) – 32% of Protestants compared with 26% of Catholics.
- ◆ 27% of people were of the opinion that protection and extortion racketeering caused a moderate level of harm.

- ◆ 26% of those surveyed thought that protection or extortion racketeering could lead to fear in the community (Table 3).
- ◆ 22% thought that small businesses or retailers could be forced to close - 26% of Protestants compared with 19% of Catholics.

Buying counterfeit CDs or DVDs

- ◆ Approximately one fifth of respondents (21%) thought that no harm was associated with buying counterfeit CDs or DVDs (Table 2).
- ◆ Younger respondents were more likely to feel that buying counterfeit CDs or DVDs would cause no or little harm compared with older respondents (Figure 2).

Figure 2: Respondents' views on the overall level of harm caused by buying counterfeit CDs or DVDs by age group



- ◆ 35% of respondents thought that buying counterfeit CDs or DVDs would cause a little harm and 27% of respondents thought that this would cause a moderate level of harm.
- ◆ 36% of those surveyed thought that people buying counterfeit CDs and DVDs would cause legitimate businesses and retailers to lose trade (Table 3) – 40% of those in paid employment compared with 31% of those not in paid employment.
- ◆ 27% of people thought that small businesses or retailers would be forced to close.

Buying smuggled cigarettes

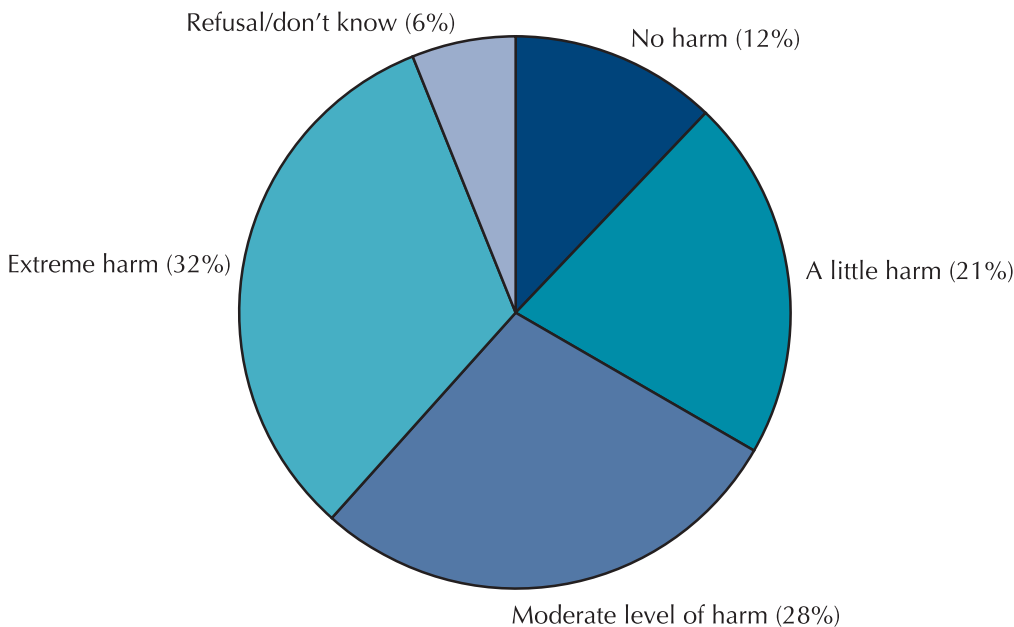
- ◆ 16% of people thought that buying smuggled cigarettes caused extreme harm, while 33% of people thought that it caused a moderate level of harm and 31% of people thought that it caused a little harm (Table 2).
- ◆ A higher proportion of those living in the East of Northern Ireland (18%) thought that buying smuggled cigarettes caused extreme harm than either those living in the West of Northern Ireland (15%) or Belfast (11%).
- ◆ 38% of respondents thought that buying smuggled cigarettes could result in damage to the victim's health, presumably due to government health warnings, while 31% were of the opinion that legitimate businesses or retailers would lose trade (Table 3).

- ◆ A higher proportion of Catholics (41%) than Protestants (35%) thought that buying smuggled cigarettes would cause damage to victims’ health while a higher proportion of Protestants (34%) than Catholics (27%) thought that legitimate businesses or retailers would lose trade.
- ◆ 34% of those in paid employment thought that buying smuggled cigarettes would result in legitimate businesses and retailers losing trade compared with 25% of those not in paid employment.

Overall harm caused locally by organised crime

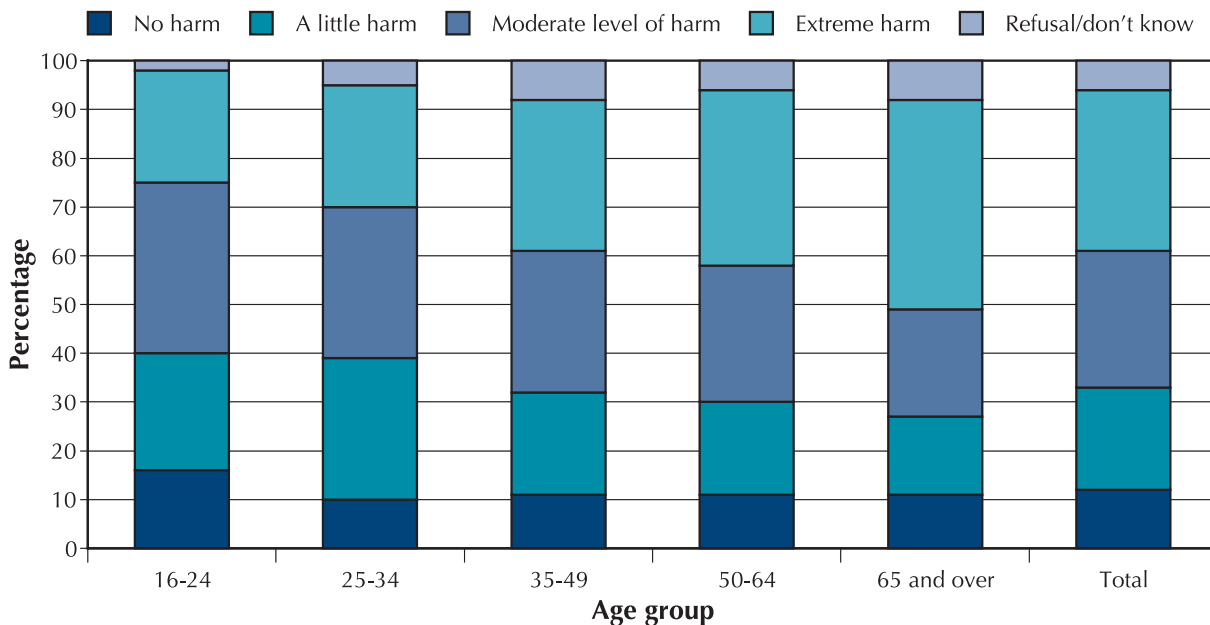
- ◆ Overall, 32% of people surveyed thought that organised crime caused extreme harm, while 28% of people thought that it caused a moderate level of harm and 21% of people thought that it caused a little harm (Table 2; Figure 3). Only 12% of those surveyed thought that organised crime caused no harm.

Figure 3: Respondents’ views on the overall level of harm caused by organised crime



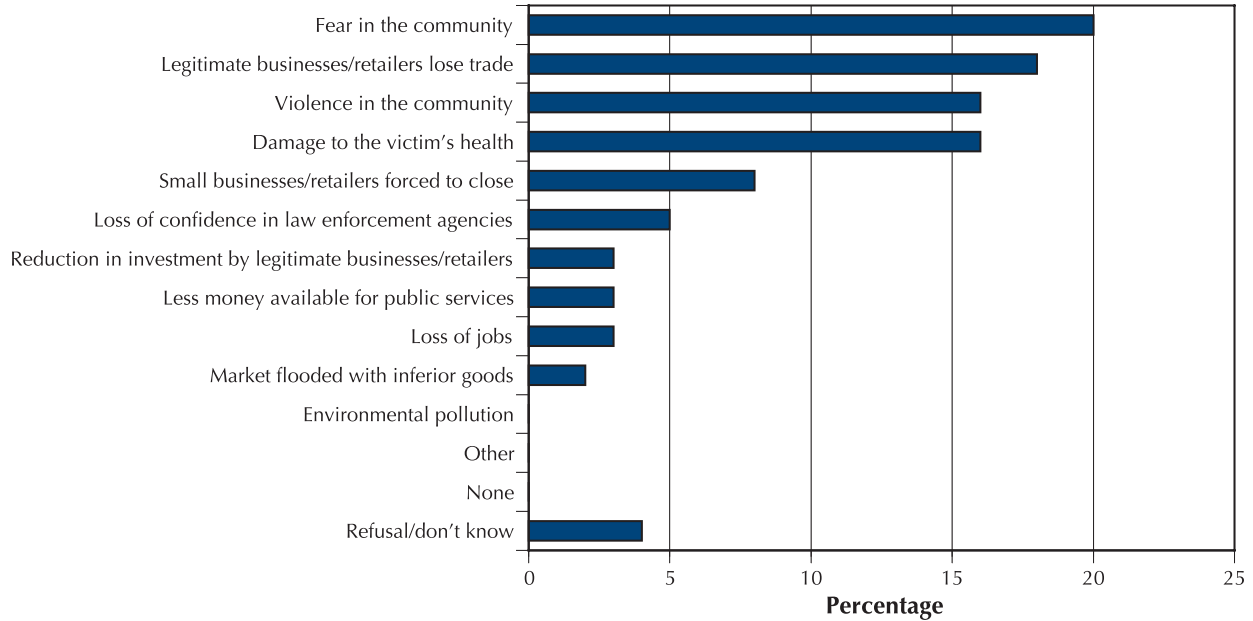
- ◆ A higher proportion of those aged 65 and over thought that organised crime caused extreme harm, than any other age category (Figure 4).

Figure 4: Respondents’ views on the overall level of harm caused by organised crime by age group



- ◆ 41% of those not in paid employment thought that overall organised crime caused extreme harm compared with 26% in paid employment.
- ◆ One fifth (20%) of respondents thought that organised crime could lead to fear in the community, 18% thought that it could lead to legitimate businesses and retailers losing trade and 16% thought that it could lead to damage to the victim’s health (Table 3; Figure 5).

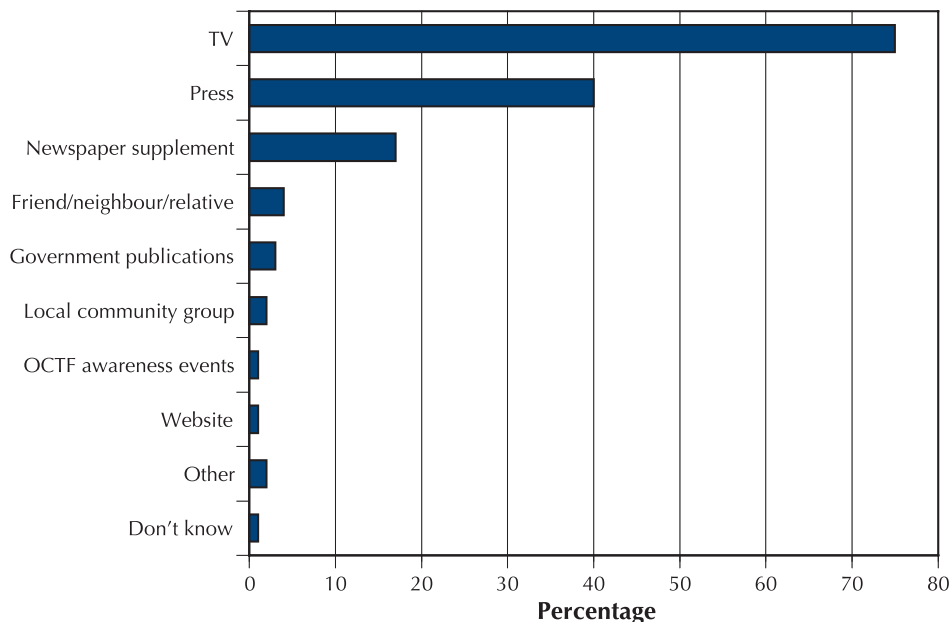
Figure 5: Respondents’ views on the overall impact caused by organised crime



The Organised Crime Task Force (OCTF)

- ◆ 37% of those surveyed in 2008 had heard of the OCTF – 43% of males and 32% of females. A similar survey in 2007 revealed that 35% had heard of the OCTF.
- ◆ 41% of those in paid employment had heard of the OCTF compared with 32% of those who were not in paid employment.
- ◆ Of those who had heard of the OCTF in 2008, this was achieved via the media – TV (75%), Press (40%) and newspaper supplements (17%) (Figure 6). 69% had heard of the OCTF via the TV in 2007.

Figure 6: How respondents’ were made aware of the Organised Crime Task Force



TECHNICAL NOTES

The sample of those surveyed in the January 2008 Northern Ireland Omnibus Survey was drawn from the Valuation and Lands Agency list, the most up-to-date listing of private households in Northern Ireland. The complete list of private addresses was stratified into three regions – Belfast, East of Northern Ireland and West of Northern Ireland, and a random sample drawn from each stratum.

At each address the interviewer lists all members of the household eligible for inclusion in the sample, that is, all persons aged 16 or over. The interviewer’s computer then randomly selects one person from each household to complete the interview. From a set sample of 2,200 addresses, 1,986 were eligible and 1,238 interviews were achieved giving a response rate of 62%.

Selecting only one individual for interview at each address means individuals living in large households have a lower chance of being included in the sample than individuals living in smaller households. The data presented in this bulletin have been weighted to prevent a bias towards smaller households.

To assess how accurately a survey sample reflects the population of Northern Ireland, the characteristics of the sample are compared with the characteristics of the current Census of Population. Table 4 shows a comparison between the January 2008 Omnibus Survey sample and the Northern Ireland adult population (16+) from the 2001 Census of Population.

Table 4: Sample Profile

		2001 Census of Population (Adults) %	January 2008 Omnibus Survey %
Sex	Male	48	48
	Female	52	52
Age Group	16-24	16	13
	25-34	19	17
	35-49	27	28
	50-64	20	23
	65 and over	17	19
Base		1,292,169	1,238

The area analysis was based on District Council boundaries and is detailed in Table 5. The 26 District Councils listed in this table were used to form each of the three areas (Belfast, East of Northern Ireland, West of Northern Ireland) described in the bulletin.

Table 5: Areas of Northern Ireland by District Council

Area	District Councils
Belfast	Belfast
East of Northern Ireland	Antrim, Ards, Ballymena, Banbridge, Carrickfergus, Castlereagh, Craigavon, Down, Larne, Lisburn, Newtownabbey, North Down
West of Northern Ireland	Armagh, Ballymoney, Coleraine, Cookstown, Dungannon, Fermanagh, Limavady, Derry, Magherafelt, Moyle, Newry & Mourne, Omagh, Strabane.

Analysis by religion is based only on those respondents who said that they were either Catholic or Protestant. Respondents who refused to answer the religion question or those who said they were a religion other than Catholic or Protestant were excluded from this analysis.

Due to rounding, percentages denoted in both tables and figures may not sum to 100%.

In the tables, if the figure is less than 0.5% the cell is denoted with a ‘0%’. In Table 3, a dash ‘-’ shows that this indicator was not asked for this particular question.

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